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ABSTRACT

In recent years there has been a rapid growth of interest in the sociological study of childhood. Drawing on a large body of contemporary sociological and anthropological research, this book develops key links between the study of childhood and social theory, exploring its historical, political, and cultural dimensions. Through a consideration of the twin dimensions of childhood--as a structural feature of societies and as a context of children's everyday lives--the book reveals childhood's socially constructed character. The book's first part, "Imagining Childhood," explores pre-sociological and transitional or sociological models of childhood--socially constructed child, tribal child, minority group child, and social structural child. The second part, "Situating Childhood," explores concepts of childhood as influenced by: social space, such as school or home; temporality, such as age, generation, and social periods; play; work; culture; children's physical bodies; and social science research. The final section of the book, "Theorizing Childhood," draws together the analytical threads of the previous chapters and indicates directions in which the new social studies of childhood might be more productively theorized and make a more than modest contribution to social theory. Contains 377 references. (HTH)

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